

## POST OFFICE MEN ASSIST TO BRING JOY TO CHILDREN

Donation Received from Government Employees by Argus Santa Claus Fund Committee.

### PORT BYRON SENDS BUNDLE

Any Kiddies Missed Through Oversight Are Asked to Call at Headquarters Monday Morning.

The Rock Island postoffice employees today sent a donation of money to The Argus Santa Claus fund committee. The committee also announced the receipt of a large package from Mrs. H. H. Wendt, Port Byron, which contained books, games and clothing, the gift of the Home Guard, a Sunday school class in the village.

The committee announced today that the distribution of gifts for over nine hundred children would be completed before night. Automobile trucks laden with parcels were busy all day delivering the bundles which will bring Christmas cheer into 600 homes.

The Argus Santa Claus fund committee does not wish to overlook any of the needy children in Rock Island, but in the rush of preparing the parcels for delivery there is a possibility that some few may have been overlooked unintentionally.

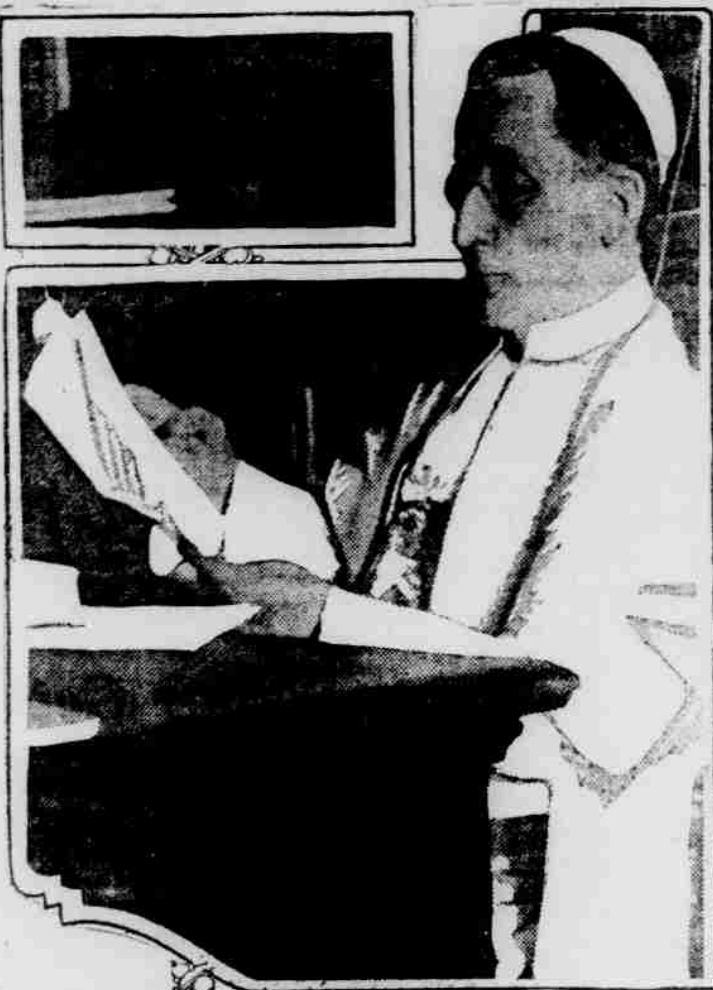
In case that this has happened the children who have been missed are requested to call Monday morning at the headquarters of The Argus Santa Claus on the first floor of the Robinson building, in rooms formerly occupied by the Central Trust & Savings bank. The committee will take care of them at that time.

The committee, however, does not look for many omissions of this kind, since the work was carried on in a very systematic manner this year. There were many happy scenes in the homes when the Argus Santa Claus arrived.

### Rotarians to Give.

According to plans made at the meeting Tuesday the members of the Rock Island Rotary club will bring Christmas cheer to families of the worthy poor in the city tomorrow morning. Each member of the club, \$5 in number, will deliver a well filled basket to families which need them, the names having been supplied by the Associated Charities. Each member will buy his own basket and deliver it personally. The baskets will contain everything to make up a tempting Christmas dinner. Next Tuesday the club will hold a New Year's dinner for

## POPE CONTINUES EFFORTS FOR PEACE



New photo of Pope Benedict XV.

Pope Benedict XV continues his labors to restore peace, despite the gloomy outlook for the close of hostilities in the near future. The pope has labored constantly since the war started to bring it to an end, but thus far his efforts have been utterly without result.

poor children at the Rock Island club. The Associated Charities will also distribute baskets among the poor tomorrow morning.

### TAG SELLING BRINGS COMMITTEE \$294.58

Approximately \$294.58 was realized through the sale of tags yesterday by the works of the Jewish relief committee, according to a report made by M. Greenblatt, treasurer of the local branch. The money will be forwarded to the headquarters in New York, later to go to the sufferers of the race in war ridden Europe. The relief committee takes weekly collections among the Jewish people of the larger cities, but contributions from the public are only asked once a year. The committee wishes to thank the public for its liberality and also the ladies who worked so hard to make the day a success.

### India Conditions Normal.

New York, Dec. 24.—Conditions in north India are as normal as they were a year ago, according to advices received here today by the board of foreign missions of the Methodist Episcopal church. Bishop Frank W. Waine, until recently stationed at Luknow in north India, has just received a letter from a colleague there who travels all over the district, stating that "India is as quiet today as it was a year ago."

The letter was written about a month ago.

### Consider Railroad Demands.

Chicago, Dec. 24.—Consideration of demands to be made of all the railroads in the country for shorter hours having been completed, representatives of the four railway brotherhoods—engineers, firemen, trainmen and conductors—left for home today.

## AUSTRIA FEARING POWER OF BERLIN

Important Conferences Between Politicians of Two Countries Are In Progress.

Zurich, Switzerland.—(Correspondence of the Associated Press.)—Important conferences between German and Austro-Hungarian politicians and leading representatives of finance and commerce are now going on in Vienna and Berlin, for the purpose of finding a basis for establishing closer economic relations between the allied empires. Although several meetings have already taken place, no definite results have yet been obtained. The industrial and commercial interests of the two countries are so divergent that it is difficult to see how an understanding can be reached which will prove satisfactory to both sides. And so far every conference seems only to have discovered new troubles in the way of reaching an agreement.

Austro-Hungarians fear that just as at present they are under the domination of Germany in military affairs, so later their financial and economic independence will also be lost before the persistent and powerful monarch of Germany. The whole question is one of the most vital importance for the future welfare of the dual monarchy, and excites far more interest in the business community than the progress of the war.

Since the Franco-Prussian war Germany has become an industrial state while Austro-Hungary has remained essentially agricultural. With the exception of Bohemia, Moravia and Lower Austria, which includes Vienna, all the other provinces of Austria are purely agricultural, and Hungary is overwhelmingly so. In both parliaments at Vienna and Budapest the agrarians always possess a large majority.

Nevertheless, both politically and militarily, a closer union between Germany and Austria is generally regarded as an absolute necessity, and will doubtless continue to be so long after the war is ended. But the problem as to how this is to be brought about is exceedingly complex.

By high protective duties Austria has long maintained an economic existence, independent of Germany, and, indeed, even opposed to German interests. In Austria everything is much dearer than in Germany, from 20 to even 50 per cent. The difference in prices is especially great in heavy wares, such as coal, iron, steel and machinery. It is only through these protective duties that Austria has managed to develop a growing industry and prevent the country from being flooded with cheap German products.

For some years Austria has almost monopolized the trade in the Balkans and the Levant, but latterly German merchants have been creeping in there and capturing customers. This has been the case more than ever since the annexation by Austria-Hungary of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1909, when both Turkey and Serbia boycotted Austrian goods. The rapidly with which Germany seized the opportunity to enter these markets caused intense irritation in Vienna and Budapest at the time. Nor has this feeling diminished since German trade has steadily grown in southeastern Europe while Austria's has as steadily decreased.

How all these matters will develop after the war nobody can foresee. Undoubtedly Austria-Hungary is placed under heavy obligations to Germany for her military aid in the war. How and in what form will Germany require payment for such service? Probably through preferential customs tariffs, or perhaps by a customs union. In either case it is declared Germany stands to gain all the profit and Austria to suffer all the injury. For then German wares would sweep Austrian markets, prices generally would be forced down, and Austrian competition for the trade in the Balkans and Levant would be hopeless.

Hence it is easy to understand the covert opposition, in nearly all parts of Austria, to Germany's efforts to bring her ally in closer commercial relationship. It is feared that economic dependence will surely follow military. For since the war begun many things have occurred which indicate Germany's aim at bringing Austria-Hungary under her commercial subjection. Only a short time ago the big banks in Berlin sent circulars to the principal Austrian investors in the first and second Austrian war loans, offering to advance them 50 per cent of the face value of their holdings provided they would use the money for investment in the third loan. The Austrian banks were only advancing 75 per cent of the former loans. Such incidents have created much distrust in the Austrian capital, and shown the necessity for exercising the utmost caution before entering into any new kind of economic arrangements with Germany, which may be fraught with the most serious consequences for the future of the dual monarchy.

Shoes have doubled in price in Vienna in the last few months, and this largely through the wearing of the short skirt, which calls for higher footwear. It is not that raw material is scarce at all; there is plenty of it from ox, calf and goat skins, but tanning materials are hardly obtainable at any price. Most of these came from abroad, but their import has been rendered impossible by the war for some time past. With the aid of these, Austria tanners could convert a hide into leather in three weeks; the same process now takes four months. Some of these materials are now costing seven times the ordinary price.

And this has led to a shortage in the supply of shoemakers' leather, which has been further increased by the women's demand for higher shoes, which take much more leather. The



## Something to Look Forward To!

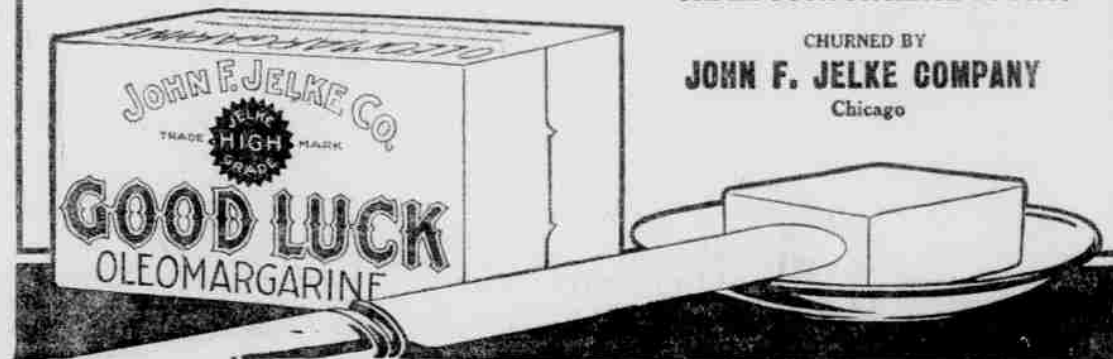
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consequence is that prices have risen tremendously. Modern shoes of the cheapest material formerly costing \$3 now cost from \$12 to \$16, while for better shoes \$16 and even \$20 are asked. Men's shoes have also gone up in price in the same proportion, although in their case no change in fashion has taken place.

Since a large quantity of tanners' materials have always been obtained from Turkey, it is possible that now, that communications have been reopened with Constantinople, fresh supplies may be obtained.

One of the most difficult of all social problems, the care of the homeless, has been solved in Vienna by the war. The number of these unfortunate persons this winter is far less than in many years. Indeed, so great has been the falling off in this class of mendicants that in many districts of the city the buildings erected for their accommodation have been converted into military hospitals and homes for refugees from the Italian theatre of war.

The disappearance of these "homeless" persons is chiefly due to so many of the men having been called to the army, when their wives and families are given relief pay, placing them often in far better circumstances than

when their husbands were in work. Then, too, the younger classes of the "homeless," who were formerly unable to obtain work in the city in the winter, can now get employment easily. The factories are constantly inquiring at the night shelters for workers. Then, too, "homeless" families

are much fewer, because the landlords are compelled to show more consideration before ejecting tenants, and the families of reservists are often better able to pay the rent than in normal times.

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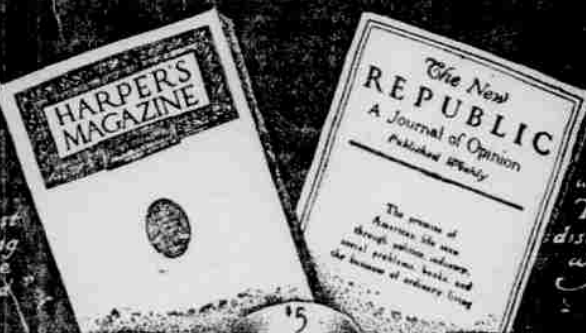
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